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ABSTRACT

Recent studies on school improvement have urged the formation of partnerships between public schools and universities to better prepare teachers for the nation's schools, and have suggested that this alliance would encourage reform in public schools and universities. One area of emphasis in this suggested reform network is the creation of clinical school settings where prospective teachers can learn the best in research and practice. This paper explores possible characteristics of a professional development school. A list of 12 components of professional development schools, as well as potential skills required of public school teachers serving as clinical faculty and as supervisors of prospective teachers, was submitted to 300 teacher educators who were asked to indicate the importance of the identified components and to identify the teacher preparation areas with the greatest need. An analysis of the responses provided guidelines on the organization requirements, characteristics, and personnel functions or responsibilities of the professional development school. (JD)

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS:

AN EXPLORATORY APPROACH

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOLS:

AN EXPLORATORY APPROACH

The 1980's have been a time of "reform" in education throughout the United States. This demand for reform has moved from the public schools into the arena that prepares public school teachers. That is, it has moved to the university units and faculty known to be involved in teacher education. Critics of the present university teacher education programs maintain that the professional education components of these programs based in the public schools do not prepare prospective teachers to adequately cope with the myriad of problems prevalent in today's public schools. These experiences are often supervised by college faculty who are not actively coping with public school students and public school teachers who may have little or no preparation in supervision of adult learners.

The reform movements during the last half of the 1980's have begun to propose changes in the preparation of prospective teachers. The Carnegie Commission's A Nation Prepared (1986) and the Holmes Group's Tomorrow's Teachers (1986) urge the formation of partnerships between the public schools and universities to better prepare teachers for the nation's public schools. These "professional development schools" would be organized through a collaborative effort of public school systems and universities. Indeed, Goodlad (Olson, 1987) has encouraged the establishment of a National Network for Educational Renewal to respond to the spirit of the professional development school reform movement that is sweeping the nation. He suggests that this alliance would encourage reform in public schools and universities. One area of emphasis in this suggested reform network is the creation of clinical school settings where prospective teachers can learn the best in research and practice.

The authors felt that this was the time to explore possible characteristics of

a professional development school. This need is based upon the concerns expressed by various accreditation groups, the emerging power of public school teacher organizations, and a commitment that there needs to be an improvement in the way prospective teachers are educated. The complexities of first-year teaching have exceeded the preparation capabilities of traditional university field experience courses. Therefore, an extensive cooperative endeavor of all entities involved in the preparation of prospective teachers is needed.

The establishment and operation of a professional development school would be a collaborative effort between a public school system and a university for the purpose of improving the preparation of prospective teachers. This idea of establishing clinical school settings where public school personnel and university faculty could cooperatively work toward the common goal of improving education practice through improving the preparation of prospective teachers would require the cooperative effort of several distinct entities. The administration of the public school and the administration of the university must view this cooperative effort without feeling an erosion of power or authority. Teachers, and in some cases teacher organizations, must not let the feeling of "empowerment" replace the issue of improving supervisory and teaching skills and program planning for prospective teachers.

The literature revealed no recommended guidelines on the organization requirements, characteristics, personnel functions or responsibilites of the professional development school. Although there were reports of informal activities commonly associated with professional development schools (Williams and Harris, 1984), limited research appears to have been completed in the area of characteristics of professional development schools. Therefore, based upon the scarcity of adequate professional development school literature, the following research questions were generated:

1. What do teacher educators in Oklahoma's higher education institutions select as the most important components of a professional development school?
2. What do elementary and secondary principals select as the most important components of a professional development school?
3. Based upon a review of literature, are there identifiable skills that should be taught to public school teachers who would serve as clinical faculty and role models for prospective teachers?
4. Based upon a review of literature, are there identifiable supervisory skills that should be taught to public school teachers for work with prospective teachers?
5. What do teacher educators in Oklahoma's higher education institutions select as the most important skills to be taught to public school teachers in a professional development school?
6. What do elementary and secondary principals in Oklahoma's public schools select as the most important skills to be taught to public school teachers in a professional development school?

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the inquiry was to examine, in an exploratory way, the concept of professional development schools. The investigators examined the current

literature on professional development schools and followed this literature search with a survey of principals and teacher educators regarding their concept of professional development schools and the training needs of the teachers working in such schools. That is, the literature was examined to glean the essential characteristics of professional development schools and what special preparation is needed by classroom teachers to work in professional development schools. Principals and teacher educators were then asked to respond to these gleaned characteristics and teacher preparation needs.

The literature search resulted in a list of 12 components of professional development schools, as well as nine potential skills required of public school teachers serving as clinical faculty and serving as supervisors of prospective teachers. For clarity, the components and skills were refined and reviewed by higher education faculty not directly involved in teacher education. Once these lists were reviewed, they were mailed to 300 principals (200 elementary and 100 secondary) and 300 teacher educators who were asked to indicate the importance of the identified components and to identify the teacher preparation areas with greatest need. The response categories available were as follows: very important, important, of little importance, and not important. In addition, the respondents were asked to generate additional professional development school characteristics and teacher training need areas.

For the purpose of analyses, the response categories were assigned sequential numerical values of one through four with one corresponding to "very important" and four to "not important." The mean responses for each of the three groups were then calculated and compared. Analyses of variance were used to test for significant differences in mean value. Where significant differences existed between means, the Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to check for significance between group differences. All analyses were done using the SPSS-X (1983) Computer programs.

RESULTS

The results of the data analyses are presented in Tables 1 and 2. The mean values reveal that the three groups found the listed characteristics and teacher preparation needs either "very important" or "important" (scale value one through two). Thus, taken as a whole, the prinicpals and teacher educators were in agreement in that the literature generated characteristics and teacher preparation needs are "very important" or "important" to the development and functioning of a professional development school.

Despite the overall agreement among the groups on the professional development school characteristics (Table 1), four items revealed a basic philosophical difference in view between the groups. There appears to be some difference regarding the importance of giving professional development school teachers release time ($F=5.03$; $df=2,223$; p 0.05). Application of the Duncan Multiple Range Test revealed that the principal groups (elementary and secondary) tended to give less support for release time than did teacher educators. The other three differences were more intense and were related to the establishment of reward systems for university professors ($F=10.24$; $df=2,219$; $p < 0.001$) and public school personnel ($F=12.31$; $df=2,223$; $p < 0.001$) and the conducting of research by university professors ($F=10.24$; $df=2,216$; $p < 0.001$). Application of the Duncan Multiple Range Test revealed that in all cases the principal groups (elementary and secondary) gave less support than did the teacher educators. Apparently, the principal groups are less likely to support a reward system for university professors and public school personnel and are less likely to support research by university professors.

The mean values (Table 2) of the perceived training needs of professional development school teachers also revealed sharp disagreement in the need for

TABLE 1

Mean Rating of Importance of Characteristics of Professional Development Schools as Perceived By Principals and Teacher Educators

	Characteristic	Elementary Principals N=50	Secondary Principals N=58	Teacher Educators N=128	Total N=236	F Ratio
1.	Share expertise by teaching in other's classroom.	1.98	1.89	2.12	2.04	1.46
2.	Decision-making body	1.64	1.52	1.54	1.57	0.54
3.	Release time for teacners	1.81	1.87	1.55	1.69	5.03*
4.	Improvement team to address school and curriculum problems	1.76	1.57	1.58	1.60	1.37
5.	Reward system for professors	2.30	2.48	1.86	2.11	10.24**
6.	Reward system for public school personnel	2.15	2.29	1.66	1.93	12.31**
7.	Research by professors	2.09	2.22	1.72	1.93	10.24**
8.	Research by public school personnel	2.02	2.14	2.11	2.11	0.31
9.	University courses taught at school site	2.11	1.95	2.23	2.12	2.03
10.	University courses team taught	1.94	1.91	2.02	1.97	0.40
11.	University students work as aides	1.45	1.65	1.58	1.58	1.10
12.	University students plan and teach lessons	1.26	1.24	1.32	1.28	0.64

* Significant difference at 0.05 level.
** Significant difference at 0.001 level.

TABLE 2

Mean Value of Importance of Professional Development School Teacher Training Needs as Perceived by Principals and Teacher Educators

	Preparation need	Elementary Principals N=50	Secondary Principals N=58	Teacher Educators N=128	Total N=236	F Ratio
1.	Making objective observations	1.60	1.41	1.33	1.41	4.24*
2.	Evaluation of effective teaching	1.44	1.33	1.27	1.32	1.92
3.	Supervisory role and responsibilities	1.54	1.53	1.45	1.48	0.56
4.	Techniques for training teachers	1.53	1.53	1.47	1.49	0.23
5.	Teaching strategies and methodologies	1.46	1.53	1.28	1.37	4.88**
6.	Current on effective teaching research	1.66	1.60	1.46	1.54	2.40
7.	Planning and conducting research	2.21	2.21	2.12	2.15	0.35
8.	Team planning and teaching	1.80	1.82	1.58	1.67	3.59*
9.	Current on classroom computer applications	1.90	1.81	1.93	1.87	0.53

* Significant difference at 0.05 level.
** Significant difference at 0.01 level.

training in teaching strategies and methodologies ($F=4.88$; $df=2,232$; $p < 0.01$). The Duncan Multiple Range Test revealed that the teacher educators gave this need more support than did the principal groups (elementary and secondary). In addition, some disagreement was obtained regarding the need for training in making objective observations ($F=4.24$; $df=2,231$; $p < 0.05$) and training in team planning and teaching ($F=3.59$; $df=2,230$; $p < 0.05$). Again the teacher educators gave this need more support than did the principal groups (elementary and secondary).

The professional development school characteristics and the professional development school training needs generated by the respondents are listed in Tables 3 and 4. Interestingly, the desire for joint research by public school personnel and university professors was highly recommended as was the need for teacher training in better communication skills and community relations. Apparently, the groups feel a need for research, but it should be a partnership undertaking on the part of the public schools and higher education. In addition, the results suggest that teachers are in need of refinement in their ability to communicate and to work with the community.

Also, the items generated by the respondents appears to reveal some concern regarding proper funding of professional development schools. The data tends to suggest that funds should be made available to implement innovative programs, purchase equipment, and to reward teachers.

DISCUSSION

This research has generated three major questions. First, what are the opinions of teachers regarding the concept of professional development schools and the training needs for teachers in these schools? This question should be addressed before the concept of professional development schools is implemented.

TABLE 3

Additional Suggested Characteristics of Professional Development Schools

	Characteristic	f
1.	Professional development school research should be conducted jointly by public school personnel and university professors.	4
2.	Professional development schools should receive supplemental state funding for their exemplary programs.	3
3.	Professional development schools should receive input from parents.	2
4.	Professional development schools should be innovative in educational practices.	2
5.	Professional development schools should provide planning time for professors and teachers.	2
6.	Professional development schools should have the latest and best technology.	2
7.	Professional development school teachers should be given adjunct status.	2
8.	Professional development school teachers should be rewarded financially for working with student teachers and for their responsibilities.	2
9.	Professional development schools should have special education experiences for prospective teachers.	1
10.	Professional development school personnel should be rotated to stimulate interest and desirability.	1
11.	Professional development schools should involve prospective teachers in "beginning of year" and "end of year" activities.	1
12.	Professional development schools should have career ladders for teachers.	1
13.	Professional development school interns should be team evaluated by professors and public school administrators.	1
14.	Professional development schools should develop different curriculum models.	1

TABLE 4

Additional Suggested Professional Development School Teacher Training Needs

	Preparation Need	f
1.	Professional development school teachers should receive training on oral and written communications.	3
2.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in community relations.	3
3.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in the use of reflective thinking skills.	2
4.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in classroom management.	2
5.	Professional development school teachers should demonstrate solid, successful teaching experiences.	1
6.	Professional development school teachers should be versed in teaching cooperation.	1
7.	Professional development school teachers should receive instruction on the evaluation of pre-professional teacher skills.	1
8.	Professional development school teachers should receive instruction on self-evaluation techniques.	1
9.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in interpersonal relation skills.	1
10.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in record keeping.	1
11.	Professional development school teachers should receive training in school law.	1

Second, the larger question of possible funding must be addressed. Although many universities and school systems support the idea, neither have the resources for a five-year pilot program to evaluate the effectiveness of the concept. However, universities and school systems should beware. They should recognize that dependence on external funding can be detrimental (Hurwitz, et al, 1976) and its tenuous nature may be an inhibiting factor in successful planning for more than one year (Binker and Neuberg, 1984).

Last, the issue of collaborative arrangements remains a question of major proportions. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (Reed and Cejda, 1987) identified five attributes of successful collaboration. Promotive interdependence, balanced interchange of valued commodities, a renegotiated pluralistic order, continuous environmental scanning and adaptation, and a multifaceted enabling framework are essential to successful collaboration. Unfortunately, there are several inhibitors that are in opposition to each attribute and these can negate the success of the total collaborative effort.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration may be one key to needed reform. While a partnership between public schools and universities will be difficult to arrange, the obstacles can be overcome with preparation and planning. Perhaps if the characteristics and teacher needs identified in this paper are addressed, the vision of a collaborative partnership can be realized. The road to collaboration will be hard and mistakes will be made, but professional development schools give us the opportunity to improve on the current structure of teacher preparation.

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